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obscure because it deals with obscure themes,—the programme of the future and Christ's return to judgment. Also because, being strongly political in its bearings, clearness would have been dangerous; it was a proclamation of the curse of heaven on the Roman power. And lastly, because the language of concealment (which the initiated would be able to interpret correctly) consists of Oriental symbols, largely derived from books like Ezekiel and Daniel, which are necessarily more or less enigmatic to the Western and modern mind. The contents are briefly as follows: Chs. 1-3 are introductory, containing the messages of the ascended Lord to the seven churches. Ch. 4 begins the apocalypse proper, which consists in a series of visions. It presents in striking imagery a description of the glory of God, and the homage of the universe to him. Ch. 5 describes the sealed book containing the mysteries of the future, which Jesus only can unlock, and his praise is sung. Ch. 6 records the breaking of six seals, revealing the calamities and judgments which are to come upon those who spurn Christ and persecute his followers. Ch. 7 introduces a pause before the breaking of the last—the seventh, seal, and gives a picture of the host of the redeemed. Chs. 8-9 see the seventh seal broken, and there come forth seven angels with trumpets to proclaim the revelation of the final mysteries. Six in turn announce signs and portents of the coming judgment which will witness Messiah's enemies destroyed and saints glorified. Chs. 10-11:14 record a pause before the seventh angel's proclamation, and represents the coming joy and sorrow, the overthrow of Jerusalem, the faithful testimony of the Christians and the cruelty of their foes. Chs. 11:15-19, the proclamation of the seventh angel. Chs. 12-13 present under various figures the opposition of the Roman power to the Church. Ch. 14 pictures the certain triumph of Christ. Chs. 15-16 record the outpouring of the seven vials of wrath and destruction. Chs. 17-18 witness the complete overthrow of the Church's arch-enemy, Rome. Ch. 19 celebrates in angelic chorus the victory of Christ. Ch. 20:1-10 records the binding and final subjection of Satan. Ch. 20:11-15, the final judgment. Chs. 21-22 present the consummation of the Kingdom of God, the culmination of the great drama of conflict and judgment in a scene of eternal peace and joy.

The practical purpose of the Apocalypse, in its relation to its own time and circumstances, is well emphasized by the writer; and the sensible view taken of the symbolic language one fully sympathizes with. When one gets the right conception of the book, and Prof. Stevens has here shown us what that is, its true character and worth appear in a most impressive manner.

Apostolic Origin or Sanction the Ultimate Test of Canonicity.* There are those who hold that the principle upon which the early Church determined the right of a book to a place in the Canon was fitness to edify. Of this fitness, experience was the test, and the Church the judge. But the real test of canonicity was quite other and simpler than this, namely, authoritativeness. And a writing could possess this quality only by having proceeded from some authorized exponent of the divine authority. Such exponents were the apostles. The apostolic (in its strict technical sense, as expressing the official action of the apostles) writings of apostles, or the writings of others which had received apostolic sanction, were authoritative. This distinctive claim is made for the apostles because (1) of their official character and position—their number was

* By Prof. Wm. M. McPheeters, D. D., in *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, April, 1892.

limited ; they were appointed directly by Christ ; their relations to the Church, their functions, and their authority, were absolutely unique ; they were without associates or successors. (2) They acted and spoke under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit, in a manner no one since has assumed. (3) The ultimate foundation of the claim is the miracles wrought by them. This was the divine seal by which their deliverances were ratified and authenticated to the Church. To produce a conviction of the canonicity of a writing, the natural and proper way, if not indeed the most satisfactory way, is to adduce suitable historical evidence that it proceeded from or was sanctioned by the Apostles as a rule of faith and life. Natural, because rules are only valid when they are the deliverance of those authorized to formulate them. It is the method suggested, if not appointed, in the Scriptures themselves (cf. Gal. 6:16 ; 2 Thess. 3:17). It was the method adopted by the early Church in forming the Canon as we now have it, in spite of many authorities who deny it. There is no book in our New Testament to-day which has not from the earliest times rightly or wrongly been connected with an Apostle, either as its author or sponsor ; and every book coming down from the first century which can make out a reasonable or even passable claim to apostolic origin or sanction, is to-day in our New Testament. The temporary canonization and later removal of certain unapostolic writings confirm the position here taken. It is a method which secures to reason its rights in the matter of religion, and so provides religion with a safeguard against the encroachments of fanaticism. And it brings the unregenerate man into rational relation to the authority of Scripture, leaving him without excuse if he refuse to submit to this authority.

The test of canonicity here proposed is unfortunately formulated, as it comprises and tries to unite two very different tests. The first test is that of apostolic authorship, the second test is that of "apostolic sanction," so-called. No one questions that apostolic authorship is a valid and complete passport to the Canon, but what proportion of the sixty-six sacred books did the apostles write ? None of the Old Testament books, and not all of the New. So a second test has to be introduced, in order to protect these unapostolic writings in the Canon : they received the "apostolic sanction," says our author. But this is a very uncertain characteristic. What constitutes "apostolic sanction ?" He does not explain. It would be desirable to go through the list of Old Testament books and the unapostolic New Testament books and hear from him just how, in each case, the apostles had stood "sponsor" for the book. But this element, on which the value of the writer's article depends, is left indefinite and illusive, and the argument remains weak and profitless. Let it now be asked, what is in fact the test which unapostolic writings, two-thirds of the Bible, were able to sustain, in virtue of which they gained admission to the Canon ?